AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.-10. (canceled)

11. (previously presented) A server computer sending a virtual character in the form of data to a client computer through a network, the server computer comprising:

communication means connected to said network for communicating with said client computer;

identification means connected to said communication means for identifying a user of said client computer, based on user information received from said client computer, from a plurality of possible users;

providing means connected to said communication means for providing a service to said identified user according to a request from said identified user;

history storage means connected to said providing means for storing a service history for each of the plurality of possible users;

storage means for storing data representing the virtual character changeable in figure based on said service history of the identified user; and

sending means connected to said communication means, said identification means, said history storage means and said storage means, for sending the virtual character having its figure changed to the identified user.

12. (previously presented) The server computer according to claim 11, wherein said history storage means includes means for storing history points that are calculated by adding up points prescribed for each kind of service, and said virtual character is changeable in figure based on said history points.

13. (previously presented) The server computer according to claim 11, further comprising determining means connected to said communication means for determining a data format with which said client computer is able to output, wherein

said sending means includes means for transforming the virtual character having its figure changed based on the service history of the identified user into the determined data format, and sending the transformed virtual character to the client computer used by said identified user.

14. (previously presented) The server computer according to claim 11, wherein

said providing means includes means for providing information according to a request from said identified user, and

said history storage means includes means for storing said information after classifying the services said information into categories,

said server computer further comprising preference information storage means connected to said history storage means for generating and storing preference information of said identified user based on said categories.

15. (previously presented) The server computer according to claim 14, wherein said storage means includes means for storing a plurality of virtual characters each being changeable in figure based on said service history,

said server computer further comprising character select means connected to said preference information storage means and said storage means for selecting one of said plurality of virtual characters based on said preference information, wherein

said sending means includes means for sending said selected virtual character having its figure changed based on said service history for said identified user.

16. (previously presented) The server computer according to claim 14, further comprising:

motion data storage means for storing motion data for implementation of a motion of said virtual character in the client computer, said motion being for displaying a questionnaire to the plurality of possible users at respective client terminals and for prompting said plurality of possible users to answer the questionnaire; and

user select means connected to said preference information storage means for selecting the identified user from among the plurality of possible users based on preference information of the plurality of possible users and a content of said questionnaire, wherein

said sending means includes means for sending the virtual character having its figure changed based on the service history for the identified user selected by the select means and the motion data of the virtual character.

17. (previously presented) The server computer according to claim 14, further comprising:

motion data storage means for storing motion data for implementation of a motion of said virtual character in the client computer, said motion being for promoting the plurality of possible users at respective client terminals to access advertisement information; and

user select means connected to said preference information storage means for selecting the identified user from among the plurality of possible users based on preference information of said plurality of possible users and a content of said advertisement information, wherein

said sending means includes means for sending the virtual character having its figure changed based on said service history for the identified user selected by the select means and the motion data of the virtual character.

18. (previously presented) The server computer according to claim 11, further comprising motion data storage means for storing motion data for implementation of a motion of said virtual character in the client computer, wherein

said sending means includes means for sending the virtual character having its figure changed based on the service history for said identified user and the motion data of said virtual character.

19. (previously presented) The server computer according to claim 18, wherein said history storage means includes means for storing history points obtained by

adding up points prescribed for each kind of service, and

the motion to be implemented in said client computer is determined according to said history points.

20. (currently amended) The server computer according to claim ~~18~~19, wherein said motion is determined according to said history points and is for displaying a questionnaire to said identified user through said client computer and for prompting said identified user to answer the questionnaire.

21. (previously presented) A virtual character sending method in a server computer for sending a virtual character in the form of data to a client computer through a network, comprising the steps of:

identifying a user of said client computer, based on user information received from said client computer, from a plurality of possible users;

providing said identified user with a service according to a request from said identified user;

storing a service history for each of the plurality of possible users ;

preparing a virtual character changeable in figure based on said service history of the identified user; and

sending the virtual character having its figure changed to the identified user.

22. (previously presented) The virtual character sending method according to claim 21, wherein

said step of storing said service history includes the step of storing history points that are calculated by adding up points prescribed for each kind of service, and

said virtual character is changeable in figure based on said history points.

23. (previously presented) The virtual character sending method according to claim 21, further comprising the step of determining a data format with which said client computer is able to output, wherein

said step of sending said virtual character includes the step of transforming the virtual character having its figure changed based on said service history for said identified user into said determined data format, and sending the transformed virtual character to said client computer used by said identified user.

24. (previously presented) The virtual character sending method according to claim 21, wherein

said step of providing the service includes the step of providing information according to a request from said identified user,

said step of storing said service history includes the step of storing said information after classifying said information into categories,

said virtual character sending method further comprising the step of generating and storing preference information of said identified user based on said categories.

25. (previously presented) The virtual character sending method according to claim 24, wherein

said step of preparing said virtual character includes the step of preparing a plurality of virtual characters each being changeable in figure based on said service history,

said virtual character sending method further comprising the step of selecting one of said plurality of virtual characters based on said preference information, wherein

said step of sending said virtual character includes the step of sending said selected virtual character having its figure changed based on said service history for said identified user.

26. (previously presented) The virtual character sending method according to claim 24, further comprising the steps of:

preparing motion data for implementation of a motion of said virtual character in the client computer, said motion being for displaying a questionnaire to the plurality of possible users at respective client terminals and for prompting the plurality of possible users to answer the questionnaire; and

selecting the identified user from among the plurality of possible users based on preference information of said plurality of possible users and a content of said questionnaire, wherein

said step of sending the virtual character includes the step of sending the virtual character having its figure changed based on said service history for the identified user selected in said selecting step and the motion data of said virtual character.

27. (previously presented) The virtual character sending method

according to claim 24, further comprising the steps of:

preparing motion data for implementation of a motion of said virtual character in the client computer, said motion being for promoting the plurality of possible users at respective client terminals to access advertisement information; and

selecting the identified user from among the plurality of possible users based on preference information of said plurality of possible users and a content of said advertisement information, wherein

said step of sending said virtual character includes the step of sending the virtual character having its figure changed based on said service history for the identified user selected in said selecting step and the motion data of said virtual character.

28. (previously presented) The virtual character sending method according to claim 21, further comprising the step of preparing motion data for implementation of a motion of said virtual character in the client computer, wherein

said step of sending said virtual character includes the step of sending the virtual character having its figure changed based on said service history for said identified user and the motion data of said virtual character.

29. (previously presented) The virtual character sending method according to claim 28, wherein

said step of storing the service history includes the step of storing history points obtained by adding up points prescribed for each kind of service, and

the motion to be implemented in said client computer is determined according to

said history points.

30. (currently amended) The virtual character sending method according to claim ~~28~~29, wherein said motion is determined according to said history points and is for displaying a questionnaire to said identified user through said client computer and for prompting said identified user to answer the questionnaire.

31. (previously presented) A computer readable recording medium recording a program for implementation of a virtual character sending method in a server computer for sending a virtual character in the form of data to a client computer through a network, the virtual character sending method comprising the steps of:

identifying a user of said client computer, based on user information received from said client computer, from a plurality of possible users;

providing said identified user with a service according to a request from said identified user;

storing a service history for each of the plurality of users;

preparing a virtual character changeable in figure based on said service history of the identified user; and

sending the virtual character having its figure changed to the identified user.

32. (previously presented) The recording medium according to claim 31, wherein

said step of storing said service history provided includes the step of storing

history points that are calculated by adding up points prescribed for each kind of service, and

said virtual character is changeable in figure based on said history points.

33. (previously presented) The recording medium according to claim 31, wherein

said virtual character sending method further comprises the step of determining a data format with which said client computer is able to output, and

said step of sending said virtual character includes the step of transforming the virtual character having its figure changed based on said service history for said identified user into said determined data format, and sending the transformed virtual character to said client computer used by said identified user.

34. (previously presented) The recording medium according to claim 31, wherein

said step of providing the service includes the step of providing information according to a request from said identified user,

said step of storing said service history includes the step of storing said information after classifying said information into categories, and

said virtual character sending method further comprises the step of generating and storing preference information of said identified user based on said categories.

35. (previously presented) The recording medium according to claim

34, wherein

said step of preparing said virtual character includes the step of preparing a plurality of virtual characters each being in figure based on said service history,

said virtual character sending method further comprises the step of selecting one of said plurality of virtual characters based on said preference information, and

said step of sending said virtual character includes the step of sending said selected virtual character having its figure changed based on said service history for said identified user.

36. (previously presented) The recording medium according to claim 34, wherein said virtual character sending method further comprises the steps of:

preparing motion data for implementation of a motion of said virtual character in the client computer, said motion being for displaying a questionnaire to the plurality of possible users at respective client terminals and for prompting the plurality of possible users to answer the questionnaire; and

selecting the identified user from among the plurality of possible users based on preference information of said plurality of users and a content of said questionnaire, and

said step of sending the virtual character includes the step of sending the virtual character having its figure changed based on said service history for the identified user selected in said selecting step and the motion data of said virtual character.

37. (previously presented) The recording medium according to claim 34, wherein said virtual character sending method further comprises the steps of:

preparing motion data for implementation of a motion of said virtual character in the client computer, said motion being for promoting the plurality of possible users at respective client terminals to access advertisement information; and

selecting the identified user from among the plurality of possible users based on preference information of said plurality of possible users and a content of said advertisement information, and

said step of sending said virtual character includes the step of sending the virtual character having its figure changed based on said service history for the identified user selected in said selecting step and the motion data of said virtual character.

38. (previously presented) The recording medium according to claim 31, wherein said virtual character sending method further comprises the step of preparing motion data for implementation of a motion of said virtual character in the client computer, and

said step of sending said virtual character includes the step of sending the virtual character having its figure changed based on said service history for said identified user and the motion data of said virtual character.

39. (previously presented) The recording medium according to claim 38, wherein

said step of storing the service history includes the step of storing history points obtained by adding up points prescribed for each kind of service, and

the motion to be implemented in said client computer is determined according to

said history points.

40. (currently amended) The recording medium according to claim ~~38~~39, wherein said motion is determined according to said history points and is for displaying a questionnaire to said identified user through said client computer and for prompting said identified user to answer the questionnaire.

41. (previously presented) The server computer as in claim 11 wherein the figure of the virtual character is changed based on an amount of usage of the services by the user.

42. (previously presented) The method as in claim 21 wherein the figure of the virtual character is changed based on an amount of usage of the services by the user.

43. (previously presented) The recording medium as in claim 31 wherein the figure of the virtual character is changed based on an amount of usage of the services by the user.

44. (previously presented) The server computer as in claim 11, where the virtual character is capable of additional functions based on an amount of usage of the services by the user.

45. (previously presented) The method as in claim 21, where the virtual character is capable of additional functions based on an amount of usage of the services by the user.

46. (previously presented) The recording medium as in claim 31, where the virtual character is capable of additional functions based on an amount of usage of the services by the user.

47. (currently amended) A method of operating a server to transmit a virtual character in the form of data to a client computer through a network, the method comprising:

storing for one particular user a plurality of categories of different services, each of the categories of different services having a plurality of different levels;

storing a different virtual character for each of the different levels of each of the categories;

selecting one of the plurality of categories based on respective scores associated with the categories of services, each respective score associated with one of the categories of services representing an amount of services in that category that have already been provided to the user; and

selecting one of the levels of the selected category based on score of the selected category; and

transmitting the virtual character to the client computer based on the selected category and the selected level of that selected category.

48. (previously presented) The method of claim 47 further comprising receiving user input requesting a service after the virtual character has been transmitted, and increasing the score of one of the categories as a result of receiving the user input requesting the service.

49. (previously presented) The method of claim 47 further comprising receiving user input providing answer to a questionnaire after the virtual character has been transmitted, and increasing the score of one of the categories as a result of receiving the user input providing the answer to a questionnaire.

50. (previously presented) The method of claim 47 further comprising receiving user input requesting access to advertising material after the virtual character has been transmitted, and increasing the score of one of the categories as a result of receiving the user input requesting access to advertising material.

51. (previously presented) The method of claim 48 wherein the score of one of the categories is increased so that a different virtual character is transmitted to the client computer than the previously transmitted virtual character.

52. (previously presented) The method of claim 49 wherein the score of one of the categories is increased so that a different virtual character is transmitted to the client computer than the previously transmitted virtual character.

53. (previously presented) The method of claim 50 wherein the score of one of the categories is increased so that a different virtual character is transmitted to the client computer than the previously transmitted virtual character.